

THE SECRET DIARY OF REBECCA SMITH

By

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Very little marked her passing for she died as she had lived. Unnoticed and unmourned, except for her small family and few friends. She was of that breed whose mothers passed on the stranglehold tradition of duty to husband, home and children, all of which Rebecca carried on faithfully.

Her husband missed her for she was loyal and true. But he also felt a great burden lift for he would no longer have to leave the bed of his numerous lady friends in the middle of the night and hurry home. Her son, who had become increasingly impatient with her attention to his needs, decided to wait a respectful time and then returned to college. It was the daughter who people thought would miss her the most for she was now a lovely young woman who couldn't seem to settle down with any of the eligible young men who wanted her. She would need a mother's advice but there would be no longer be any to counsel her.

And so Rebecca had passed through life leaving little behind for people to remember her by. Loyal to the end, she had carried out the role laid down by her mother and her mother before her.

In all the forty five years of her life, no one had ever encouraged her to free her imagination nor to explore a world outside her home. If ever she would express a desire to travel or to mention that perhaps she could get a job, it was quickly turned aside. Whatever frustration she felt was noted as

unworthy of her responsibilities.

No one ever saw into Rebecca for she rarely did anything to cause notice to herself. She was just there. Silenced by duty and constantly struggling with self guilt at the defiance she felt, she knew of only one way to cry out as to who she really was. She had kept secrets from her family but perhaps the greatest was her diary. In its pages, she told of who Rebecca Smith really was. Of the full life she would have had if only fate hadn't consigned her to the one her decency demanded she live. Several times she was almost caught making her entries but managed to elude detection. In one part of her world at least, she would be mistress. No one would see the diary until after her death.

She wanted them to know who she really was. That she was more than the almost faceless woman who was simply there. The diary would cry out to them that she'd had a life after all. A life filled with dreams, hopes and yes, most of all, her love.

Only days after her death, her daughter found the diary. Missing Rebecca more than he thought possible, her husband had asked the young woman to go through her mother's things. He couldn't bear having them around. It didn't help either that he felt guilty seeking the warmth of another woman at night.

Knowing that it was the daughter who'd be assigned to the task, Rebecca had placed the diary in a knitted handbag that

the girl had long admired. And so, it was found...and Rebecca Smith was discovered for whom she really was.

As the diary is read, the scenes flash back. In them we discover that Rebecca had a consuming need for love, a love that was denied by her husband. For he was of the school who felt that for a wife to show passion or sensuality, was immoral. That was for the women he knew. And so, for Rebecca, even though she was a married woman, a crippling chastity had been assigned.

The now exposed secret life reveals her sexual frustration and need. A need she'd satisfied with a love affair that had lasted for years before her lover had mysteriously disappeared.

In the diary, Rebecca discloses her search for the man and of her suspicion that he'd been killed. Later on, she tells of her growing belief as to whom the murderer might be.

For Rebecca's daughter, the revelation of her mother's true self helps to further an understanding of her own difficulty with men as the older woman confesses to her anxiety that she has passed on her own fears to her child.

The daughter struggles over Rebecca's anguish at not solving the murder so that the dead man can be avenged. With a terrible guilt now unleashed upon the daughter at the discovery of how she had misjudged Rebecca, she is determined to find the guilty man and hopefully finish her mother's quest.

In so doing, she puts herself in great jeopardy.. Forced to seek help, she shows her father the diary and he too seeks redemption for the wasted years with Rebecca. Although finding the killer would bring public knowledge that another man had given his wife the love that he had failed to offer, the father takes up the hunt. In the murderer's arrest, Rebecca's husband has written the final chapter of her secret diary.